

King County Agriculture



Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Water and Land Resources Division
King County Agriculture Commission



King County

King County Agriculture Commission



We listen to a wide variety of groups and advise the King County Executive and Council on legislation, policy and programs that affect farming in the County.

Seattle Has Long Supported Local Agriculture

- Preserving Farmland
- Saving the Pike Place Market
- Supporting neighborhood farmers markets
- Supporting growing food in the city
- Local Food Action Initiative and Regional Food Policy Council

King County Agriculture Program

- Five staff members
- Farmland Preservation Program
- Policy, regulations, review
- Assisting farmers in resource protection
- Assisting farmers with permitting, marketing, flood response
- Coordinating farmers market managers – access project
- Importance of partnerships (public and private) - we are all in this together

How Big Is the Local Food Market?

4 million people live in the Puget Sound Region

Annual food sales
\$8-10 billion

USDA – ERS estimates

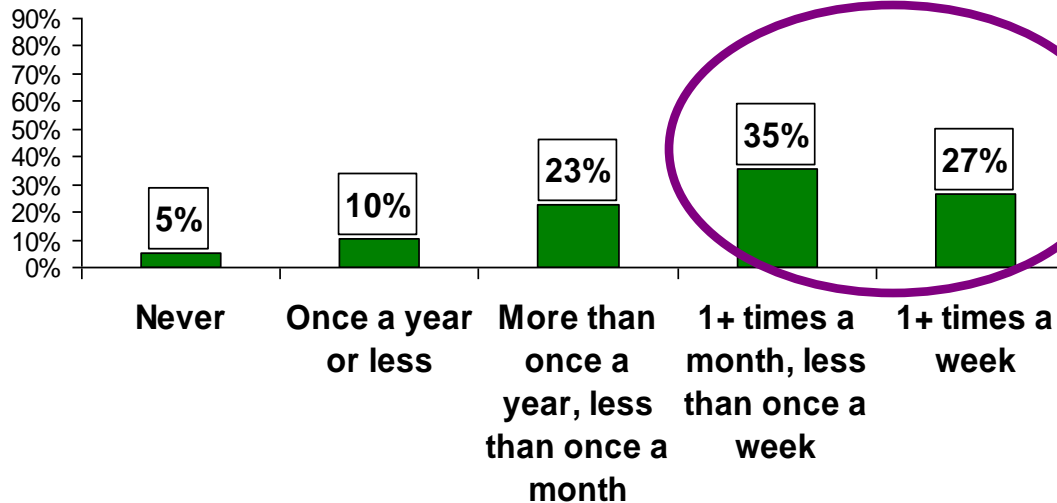
\$1 billion local agriculture
production. Half of that is
non-food items

USDA Census of Ag estimates

King County Residents Want Local Food

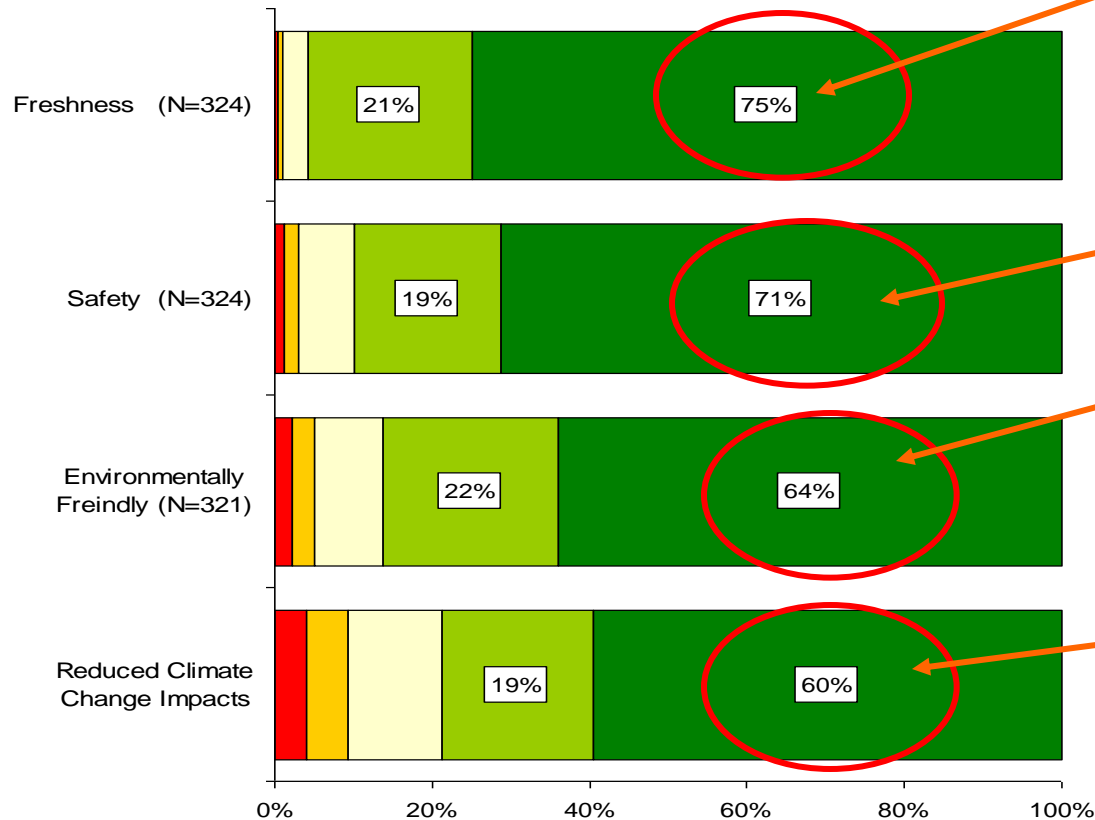
62% buy local food regularly

How often do you purchase food produced on farms in King County?
(N=389)



Locally Grown Food Is Valued

Why people buy food grown in King County



Freshness

Food Safety

Environmentally Friendly

Reduced Climate Change Impacts

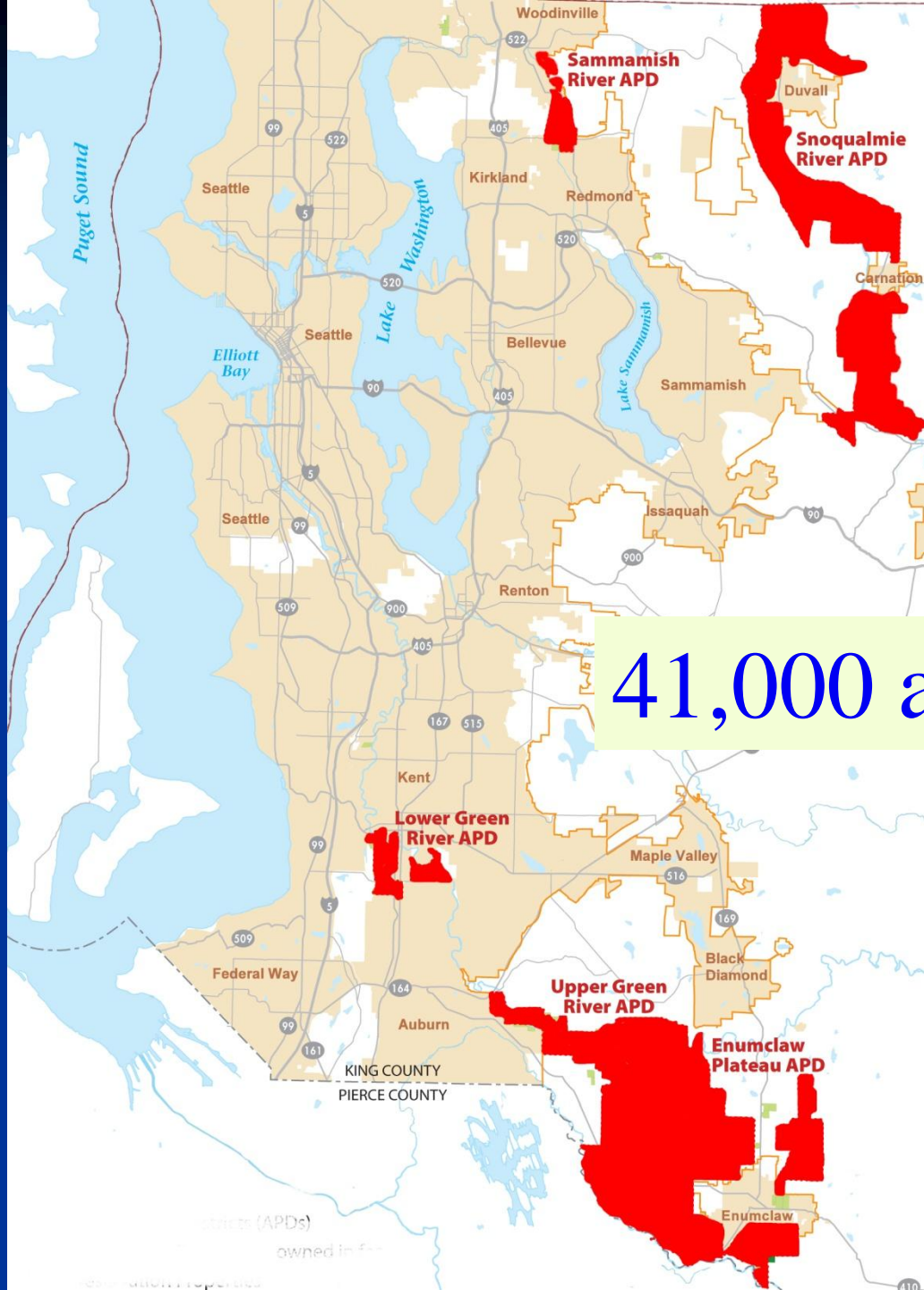
Agriculture as an Economic Force



1st in state on per
acre production
value

Enough land to
meet local demand
for many fruits and
vegetables

\$127 million of annual production. Ranks 3rd in Western
Washington and 13th out of 39 state counties



41,000 acres

Keeping Farmers Farming



What is needed to increase food production?

A Plan for the Future

FARMS Report published in 2009

- Reduce flood and drainage losses
- Land affordability and farm succession
- Regulatory issues
- Water availability
- Marketing and economic development
- Long term sustainability of agriculture program and related services

Drainage



Streamline permitting for agricultural drainage maintenance while maintaining standards for environmental protection.

Develop a single, simple permit process that integrates the different levels of regulations.

The process should allow farmers the ability to apply for permits and do the work themselves as needed at a reasonable cost.

Flooding



Explore ways to allow productive agriculture to expand in flood zones while maintaining public safety.

Recent code changes have allowed farmers to build 24 farm pads. Working on 8 house or barn elevations.

Water Availability



Work with state agencies and stakeholders to develop irrigation policies

Explore other sources such as reclaimed water

Inter-jurisdictional issue

Marketing and Economic Development



Inter-jurisdictional support needed:

- Farmers market forum
- Puget Sound Fresh
- Infrastructure development

Farmers Markets in Seattle



- 75 King County farmers
- 16 farmers markets
- \$ 16-18 million in annual sales
- Multiplies 2.5 times in the local economy

Farmers Market Access Project

- Increase access to low income shoppers
- Farmers will be able to accept electronic food benefit cards and WIC fruit and vegetable checks
- Seattle participants:
 - Madrona Farmers Market
 - Columbia City Farmers Market
 - Georgetown Farmers Market
 - Clean Greens
 - Seattle Tilth's Farm Incubator
 - Seattle P-Patch Market Garden

Affordability and Farmer Succession



Farmland affordability - need creative ways to keep land affordable.

Need sustainable support for farm credit, FarmLink, and intergenerational transitions

An appropriate funding source must be identified to continue this work

Farm-City Connections



A strong farm-city connection is crucial to the success of local agriculture

Financial and Inter-local Support



The region and King County need to broaden financial support for local agriculture

Work with cities to address impacts of urbanization on agriculture, to preserve rural environment, and retain agricultural uses

Funding Challenges

- FarmLink, succession planning, support to new farmers, farmland affordability
- Puget Sound Fresh
- Farmers Market support
- Infrastructure development
- Research and education on production and farm practices – WSU Extension